CIA Gets Hold-Down Notice

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The Central Intelligence Agency has been told by a Senate committee that it must heed new legislation calling for an immediate stop to most foreign CIA operations not soley aimed at the gathering of intelligence.

The new restrictions on the agency's foreign activities, cited in a letter released yesterday by Sen. John J. Sparkman, D-Ala., acting chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, came amid growing controversy over the make-up of the presidential panel named Sunday to investigate charges of CIA spying on U.S. citizens.

Some liberal members of Congress, joined by such groups as the American Civil Liberties Union, expressed doubt over the objectivity and independence of the eight-member commission and specifically challenged President Ford's decision to name Vice President Rockefeller as its chairman.

MEANTIME, high officials of the Justice Department met late yesterday to plan their investigation into possible illegalities arising from the CIA alleged illegal domestic activities.

Justice officials said that the investigation would be conducted jointly by lawyers in the criminal and civil rights divisions, under the direction of Laurence H. Silberman, deputy attorney general.

One official source said that the department's investigation would be governed by federal statutes prohibiting those acting under the color of law, which includes agents of the CIA, from conspiring to deprive citizens of their civil rights.

The new limitations on the CIA's foreign activities were approved late last year by the House and Senate with little public fanfare as an amendment to the 1974 Foreign Assistance Act, which was signed into law by the President on Dec. 30.

The amendment provides that no appropriated funds "may be expended by or on behalf of the Central Intelligence Agency for operations in foreign countries, other than activities intended solely for obtaining necessary intelligence, unless and until the President finds that each such operation is important to the national security of the United States."

UPON MAKING that determination, the bill says, the President must report as much in a written statement to the appropriate committees.

The legislation means that, pending specific presidential approval, the CIA would be unable to mount clandestine political operations against foreign governments or in other ways manipulate other countries. The amendment thus would have barred the widely publicized "destabilization" program between 1970 and 1973, whose target was the elected government of the Marxist president of Chile, Salvador Allende Gossens.